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A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

LORD MAYOR

AND

ALDERMEN,

ON

MONDAY, *September* 3. 1744.

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SERMON

Preached before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

LORD MAYOR,

AND

ALDERMEN,

AND THE

LIVERIES of the several COMPANIES

of the CITY of LONDON,

AT THE

CHURCH of St. BRIDE,

On Monday, September 3, 1744.

Being the Day appointed to be observed as a Publick Fast for the dreadful Fire which happen'd in London in the Year 1666.

By JOHN DOUGHTY, M.A.

LONDON:

Printed for J. RIVINGTON, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

M DCC XLIV.

Misery the Consequence of Sin.

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LIVERIES of the several COMPANIES of the CITY of *LONDON*,

AT THE

CATHEDRAL Church of *St. PAUL*,

On *Monday*, *September* 3. 1744.

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LONDON:

Printed for J. RIVINGTON, in *St. Paul's Church-yard.*

M.DCC.XLIV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

WESTLEY, Mayor.

Tuesday *the* 18*th Day of* September, 1744, *and in the Eighteenth Year of the Reign of King* GEORGE II. *of* Great Britain, *&c.*

IT is Ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Mr. DOUGHTY, for his Sermon preach'd before the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of this City, at the Cathedral Church of *St. Paul*, on *Monday* the Third Inſtant; being the Day appointed to be obſerved as a Public Faſt, for the dreadful Fire which happened in *London*, in the Year 1666; and that he be deſired to print the ſame.

MAN.

PSALM CVII. Ver. 34.

A fruitful Land maketh He barren, for the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.

THAT this Scripture might have been applied very properly, almoſt literally indeed, to this now great and flouriſhing City, this Day Seventy-eight Years, I need not tell any one here. None of us, here aſſembled to humble ourſelves before GOD at this time, can be ignorant what we do it for. It may rather be *my* Province to inquire into the Occaſion of it; why GOD Almighty ſhould ſuffer it (for nothing can be done but by his Permiſſion), why He ſhould ſuffer by much the greater Part of it, however, to be expoſed to the mercileſs Rage

of ſuch a * Fire as, perhaps, (one excepted) was ſcarce ever heard of before. It muſt have been *for the Wickedneſs of them that dwelt therein.* It could be nothing elſe: For GOD Almighty never viſits in ſuch a very extraordinary Manner, but for very great and crying Sins; never ſhews Himſelf ſo very viſibly, but when it's abſolutely neceſſary, that his Power ſhould be known.

NOW, in order to proceed regularly, we may begin with obſerving, that Miſery, in ſome Degree or other, will ever be the Conſequence of Sin. And this will hold either in Private or Social

* *Sept.* 2. 1666. A Fire broke out in *London*, where the Monument now ſtands; which deſtroyed, in the Space of Four Days, Eighty-nine Churches, amongſt which was the Cathedral of *St. Paul's*; the City Gates, the Exchange, Cuſtom-houſe, *Guildhall*, *Sion College*, and many public Structures, Hoſpitals, Schools, Libraries, a vaſt Number of ſtately Edifices, 13200 dwelling Houſes, 400 Streets. The Ruins of the City were 436 Acres, extending, from the Tower, along the *Thames* Side, to the *Temple* Church; and from the North-eaſt Gate, along the City Wall, to *Holbourn-bridge*, or *Fleet-ditch*. During the Continuance of the Fire, the King, and the Duke of *York*, and many of the Nobility and Great Miniſters, uſed their utmoſt Endeavours to prevent the ſpreading of it; they made the Round of the Fire uſually twice a Day,

Social Life; with reſpect either to particular Perſons, or to a connected Body. Private Vices (how great ſoever), perhaps, may not be puniſhed here; but then 'tis for this Reaſon, becauſe they will be puniſhed hereafter: But as to a public Body, conſidered as ſuch, That is capable of Puniſhment only in this World. If *thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other Gods, and worſhip them, and ſerve them, I teſtify againſt you this Day, that ye ſhall ſurely periſh* *. And in another Place, *If ye ſhall at all turn from following me, you or your Children, and will not keep my Commandments, and my Statutes, which I have ſet before you, then will I cut off Iſrael from the Land which I have given them, and Iſrael ſhall be a Proverb and a By-word* †. To which I may add the wiſe Man's Remark ‡, which is a very juſt one, and

Day, for many Hours together, on Horſeback and on Foot; gave Orders for purſuing the Work, by Commands, Threatenings, Deſires, Example, and good Store of Money; which the King himſelf diſtributed to the Workmen. *Salmon's Chronological Hiſtorian*, p. 152.

* *Deut.* viii. 19.

† 1 *Kings* ix. 6, 7.

‡ *Prov.* xiv. 34.

will always be found to be ſo; that *Righteouſneſs* * *exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any People*; and, if perſiſted in, will infallibly prove their utter Ruin †.

But, as Miſery is the *Conſequence* of Sin, *now*; ſo we may obſerve too, that Sin was the very Thing that firſt introduced it, and gave our Enemy the Triumph of ruining our Nature. Before Man ſinned, he was like God.

In Proceſs of Time, as the World grew more populous, Laws were enacted; and, in order to keep Men within proper Bounds, they were obliged to a regular Obſervance of them. And, in general, the Succeſs of their Undertakings, whatever they were, was according to their Behaviour, either good or bad. And they are miſtaken who affirm, "That at the Beginning "of the World, for near Two thouſand Years "together ‡, Mankind lived without any Law,

* *Diis te minorem quod geris, imperas;*
Hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum.

† *Dii multa* neglecti *dederunt*
Heſperiæ mala luctuoſæ. Hor. Carm. *lib.* iii. *Ode* 6.

‡ Mr. *Stackhouſe*'s Hiſtory of the Bible, *Vol.* 1. *p.* 105.

"with-

" without any Precepts, without any Pro-
" miſes from GOD; and that the Religion
" from *Adam* to *Abraham* was purely natural,
" and ſuch as had nothing but right Rea-
" ſon to be its Rule and Meaſure." It was no ſuch thing: It is true, indeed, the Law of Nature was in full Force; but they were not guided by the Law of Nature *only*.

WHEN GOD ſaw, that the Wickedneſs of Man was great in the Earth, and that the Thoughts of his Heart were only evil continually; that though He had made him upright, yet he had ſought out many Inventions *, *then He made a way to his Indignation, and ſpared not their Soul from Death* †; for the Flood came, and deſtroyed them all. So univerſal was the Deluge, that every Creature under Heaven, except what was preſerved in the Ark, was ſwept away in the general Devaſtation. But *Noah* found Favour with GOD, and GOD remembered *Noah*; and he and his Family were ſaved from

* *Eccleſ.* vii. 29.

† *Pſal.* lxxviii. 51.

the Deſtruction that was then brought upon the Earth *. So in the Days of *Lot*, *People eat and drank, they bought and ſold, they planted, they builded*; that is, were engaged in the ordinary Occurrences of Life; but becauſe they had *given themſelves over to Fornication, and went after ſtrange Fleſh* †, *the heavy Wrath of* GOD *came upon them, and ſlew the wealthieſt of them* ‡. The very Day that *Lot* went out of *Sodom*, it rained Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven, and deſtroyed them all.

NOW theſe Things happened unto them *for Enſamples*, ‖ *and they are written for our Admonition*; that thoſe that come after may flee from ſuch dangerous Vices, *hear, and fear; and do no more any ſuch Wickedneſs* **.

THAT this Nation has, at this time, very great Reaſon to apprehend ſome general Judg-

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* *Pſal.* xlvi. 8.

† *Jude*, ver. 7.

‡ *Pſal.* lxxviii. 31.

‖ 1 *Cor.* x. 11.

** *Deut.* xiii. 11.

ment,

ment, from the great Decay of Religion, the Inſolence of Vice, and the Overbearing of Impiety, is what I will undertake to make appear in what I have farther to offer: *A fruitful Land it certainly is; but it may ſoon be made barren, for the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.*

WHAT were the particular reigning Vices of this Place, or whether Vice, in every Branch of it, might have overſpread it, when GOD thought proper in ſo remarkable a manner to viſit it, as almoſt to conſume it, I will not take upon me to determine: Only, I fear I might venture to ſay, that People in general were not worſe *then*, than they are *now*; when the very Vitals of Religion are ſtruck at, and ſuch Aſſertions maintained, as muſt make *both the Ears of every Chriſtian that heareth them to tingle* *. Did our Bleſſed Saviour come down from Heaven, and *ſuffer Death upon the Croſs, for our Redemption?* And, ſhall a bold, impudent Blaſphemer †, publicly queſtion, Whether he really died, or not? Things of this kind (and there

* 1 *Sam.* iii. 11.

† Reſurrecton of JESUS conſidered, *p.* 62.

are too many of them) muſt give a very great Shock to every good Man, and *ſuch an Overflowing of Ungodlineſs make him afraid* *. But if *the Foundations are caſt down, What* † *can the Righteous do? They ſhall ſave their own Souls, they ſhall be delivered themſelves; but the Land ſhall be deſolate.*

NOW-A-DAYS Chriſtianity is attacked from every Quarter: *The wild* ‡ *Boar out of the Wood doth root it up*; and Ill-nature and Ill-manners *furiouſly rage together*, againſt it. At another time, to proceed unſuſpected, and to cut the deeper, the Libertine aſſumes an Air of Gravity, and appears in a friendly Garb; but, all the while, *the Voice is* Jacob's *Voice, but the Hands are the Hands of* Eſau. Then, Ridicule and Mockery take their Turn, and try their Strength: But the Pleaſantry of Wickedneſs will never take away the Malignity of it; nor can Wit (if this may be called ſo) atone for Sin. The Scoffer may think himſelf wiſe; but *Solomon*,

* *Pſal.* xviii. 3.
† Ibid. xi. 3.
‡ Ibid. lxxx. 13.

(who

(who was a tolerable good Judge) will tell him, he is a Fool. But vain and fruitleſs are all their, Attempts, and their Imaginations are as wild, and as weak, as they are wicked. Religion has the Rock of Ages for its Support: *No Weapon formed againſt it ſhall proſper, but every Tongue, that ſhall riſe againſt it in Judgment, it ſhall condemn. This is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord, and their Righteouſneſs is of me, ſaith the Lord*.*

AGAIN: *Them that honour me, ſays* GOD, I will *honour, but they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed.* Now, really, it can be nothing leſs than deſpiſing him, to profane his Sabbaths, and pay no regard at all to his Sanctuary. A moſt notorious Breach of a poſitive Precept; *Ye ſhall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuary* †.

'TIS a melancholy Reflection, how few are faultleſs in this Particular! What Numbers are there, (and ſome who would not paſs for in-

* *Iſa.* liv. 17.

† *Lev.* xix. 30.

conſiderable People neither) who look upon *Sunday*, not only as a Day of Reſt (for that indeed it is), but as their only Day of Pleaſure; the moſt proper of any, to be idle, looſe, and diſorderly! Has GOD Almighty reſerved only *one* Day for himſelf, and liberally indulged the Remainder to our own Uſe? And ſhall not that *One* Day be kept holy? Surely, we ſhould eſteem it our particular Privilege and Happineſs, to have a Day of Reſt ſet apart for his Service, and the Concerns of our own Souls; to have a Day free from Diſtractions, diſengaged from the World; a Day ſacred to divine Love, a Day of heavenly Reſt and Refreſhment. Upon this Day we ſhould aſſemble and meet together, with Comfort and Joy in our Hearts, *to render Thanks for the great Benefits we have received at his Hands, for all his Goodneſs and Loving-kindneſs every Day vouchſafed to us, and to all Men. We ſhould ſet forth his moſt worthy Praiſe, hear his moſt holy Word*; and then we might preſume to renew our Petitions, and *ask thoſe Things that are requiſite and neceſſary, as well for the Body as the Soul.* And if we ask *faithfully*, we ſhall *obtain effectually. For*

our heavenly Father * *knoweth, that we have need of all theſe Things, and is always more ready to hear than we to pray; and to give more than either we deſire, or can in any degree deſerve.* And what a Bleſſing might this introduce? What might we not promiſe ourſelves from ſuch a Reformation? But, at preſent, 'tis a very diſtant Proſpect; *The whole Head is ſick, and the whole Heart faint* †. A Diſregard, if not a Contempt, of Religion is almoſt univerſal; and, if we don't take great Care, Iniquity may *be like a ſore Burden, too heavy for us to bear* ‡. 'Tis more than probable, that a Neglect of the Sabbath was *one* Cauſe of that particular Judgment, to which, at this time, we have a particular Reference; and provoked GOD, *terrible in his Judgments, and wonderful in his Doings toward the Children of Men, to command Fire to come down from Heaven* ‖. The ſame Cauſe may produce the ſame Effect. GOD Almighty grant it may

* *Matt.* vi. 32.
† *Iſa.* i. 5.
‡ *Pſal.* xxxviii. 4.
‖ *Luke* ix. 54.

not! However, I am ſure we can't be ſaid to fear, *where no Fear is. For our Iniquities have ſeparated* * *between us and our* GOD; and it *is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not conſumed* †, *becauſe his Compaſſions fail not.* The very Reaſon uſually given by ſome of the greater ſort of People for travelling upon *Sunday*, preferably to any other Day, is really, when rightly conſidered, a very good ‡ Reaſon *againſt* it (yet it is continued!). And, under its preſent Circumſtances, it can only be agreeable, becauſe 'tis wrong; they can only do it, becauſe they ought *not* to do it. *Shall I not viſit for theſe Things, ſaith the Lord; and ſhall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* In ſhort, without a proper Regard had to the Sabbath, this habitable Earth would ſoon become a wild, fruitleſs Foreſt, and Men, like

* *Iſaiah* lix. 2.

† *Lam.* iii. 22.

‡ The Reaſon uſually given is, That there are fewer Carriages upon the Road. This may be true, as to Carts and Waggons; but, I believe, as to Coaches and Chariots, Chaiſes and Chairs, there are, within Twenty Miles of *London*, near Ten times the Number upon that Day, as upon any other.

ſo

ſo many Beaſts, roving in it. So much does that which is Natural depend upon that which is * Poſitive; and that which is Human, contrary to the Suggeſtions of modern Infidels, upon that which is Divine.

ANOTHER Reaſon why we may apprehend, that *Sentence may be ſpeedily executed*, is, an uncommon Profaneneſs and Immorality: For I would obſerve, that it is not a Breach of the *Fourth* Commandment only that we are guilty of, but, to a moſt ſcandalous Degree, of the *Third*; and eſpecially, among the lower Sort. What Oaths and Imprecations! What repeated Calls upon GOD eternally to damn them! They know not what they do: All this muſt be owing to want of Conſideration. *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth; for the Lord hath ſpoken: I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have rebelled againſt me. The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſter's Crib; but* Iſrael *does not know, my People doth not*

* *See* Mr. *Skeeler's* Sermon upon the Fourth Commandment.

con-

conſider *. The Brute Creation know their Benefactors, are ſenſible of good Uſage, and ready to make their grateful Acknowledgments, all the Return in their Power; but Man, ungrateful Man, muſt not, in this View, be *compared* even to the *Beaſts that periſh*. Reaſon, or rather the *Abuſe* of it, which ſhould keep him *above* them, ſinks him *below* them. For *they* anſwer the Ends of their Creation, and appear in Character; but Man, quite the reverſe.

BUT farther: *A very elegant, and much admired* † *Author has obſerved, That the Powers of Men are* "*very happily limited, and no Man* "*is ſufficient for univerſal Tranſgreſſion: And* "*happy is it*, ſays he, *that they are not; for* "*if partial and* limited *Wickedneſs produce ſo* "*much Miſchief in the World; what would* "*become of it, if the Abilities of evil Men* "*were unlimited, and it were expoſed to* "*boundleſs and univerſal Iniquity?*"

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* *Iſa.* i. 2, 3.

† Author of *The Life of* David, in his firſt Sermon upon the *Social Duties*.

IN like manner, if the World is bad even now under good Laws, and good Diſcipline, How much more daring and inſolent would Men grow, if at full Liberty, and free from all Reſtraint? *The Law*, ſays the Apoſtle, *was not made for a righteous Man, but for the Lawleſs and Diſobedient*; of which Sort there will ever be enow fully to prove the abſolute Neceſſity not only of enacting Laws, but of proceeding to a ſtrict and regulat Execution of them *. And it will ever be in the Power of the Magiſtrate to leſſen the Number of Offenders, by an exemplary Puniſhment of Wickedneſs and Vice, at the ſame time to encourage thoſe that do well for the Maintenance of true Religion and Virtue. And here it is obvious to remark, what deſerves to be taken notice of, to the very great Honour of the Magiſtracy of this Metropolis, that a very conſiderable Step has of late † been taken towards the diſcountenancing Lewdneſs and Debauchery, and giving a Check to the groſſeſt Immoralities.

* *Quid leges ſine moribus*
Vanæ proficiunt? Hor. Carm. Lib. iii. Ode 24.

† *Bartholomew-Fair*, this Year, only four Days, inſtead of 10 or 12.

This

This *Wiſdom muſt be juſtified of all* * who have any Regard for the Honour of GOD, or are at all concerned in the Intereſts of Religion. The Wicked and Profane, indeed, may *ſhoot out their Lips, and ſhake their Heads* ‡; but they cannot ſay, *So would we have it* ‖. No; it breaks in upon their Schemes, and defeats their evil Purpoſes. Wickedneſs in every Shape, and a great deal of it too, may have been prevented by this ſeaſonable Interpoſition, and many the Deſigns that may have been baffled of that ſubtle Adverſary, who at all Times and Places, but at thoſe of public Rendezvouz particularly, and there with more than ordinary Succeſs, *walks about ſeeking whom he may devour.* Theſe are unguarded Hours; at ſuch times, the ſtrongeſt Attacks are made upon us, and we are merely paſſive to their Impreſſions: They attract ſo forcibly, and ſucceed each other ſo faſt, that we have no Opportunity, no Strength, at laſt no *Inclination*, to withſtand them. Certainly then it muſt be right to keep out of the way of them: Temptation is always to be avoided, where there is even

* *Luke* vii. 35.

‡ *Pſal.* xxii. 7.

‖ *Pſal.* xxxv. 25.

a Poſſibility of being overcome by it.——— But I muſt not forget, that, in reference to what I have been juſt obſerving, this good Example has already had *one* good Effect; and a Pariſh *, not far from hence, has given public repeated Notice (I mention it to their Honour), *That their Fair, which by the Patent is limited to be held upon* Michaelmas-Day *annually, and no longer, ſhall be held no longer; and that in caſe any Perſon or Perſons ſhall be there aſſembled, and be guilty of looſe and diſorderly Practices, to the great Annoyance and Diſturbance of his Majeſty's good and ſober Subjects, and tending greatly to the debauching and ruining of Youth; ſuch Perſons, he, ſhe, or they, ſo offending, ſhall be proſecuted according to Law.*

I THINK they can have no other View in this, than to expreſs their Abhorrence of the iniquitous deſtructive Schemes that have for ſeveral Years laſt paſt been carried on there, and to prevent the like for the future. A plain Proof, that, as bad as the World is, it might be worſe; and that though the Faithful are *miniſhed*, they

* *Mile-End* in the Pariſh of *St. Dunſtan Stepney*.

are not quite excluded *from among the Children of Men* *.

To conclude——

VERY great is the Power of Example. When the *Kings* of the Earth ſtand up, and the *Rulers* take Counſel together, not againſt the LORD, but in *Defence* of his Religion; when thoſe that are in *Authority* exert themſelves, and are *zealous towards GOD* †; extenſive will be the Influence of their good Works. 'Tis in *their* Power to be the Ornament, the Support of Religion; in the Apoſtle's Phraſe, *to adorn the Doctrine of GOD their Saviour in all things*. 'Tis in *their* Power to be, what all Men muſt value themſelves upon being, the happy Inſtruments even of ſaving their Country. *When Phinees ſtood up and prayed, the Plague ceaſed* ‡. An invaluable Bleſſing to any Community is a Good-Great-Man. Such may ſucceſsfully intercede with GOD for a ſinful Land, (like *Solomon* in his Prayer at the

* *Pſal.* xii. 1.

† *Acts* xxii. 3.

‡ *Pſal.* cvi. 30.

Dedication of the Temple, for his People *Iſrael* *); and for *their* ſakes He may be intreated for the Land; *may hear in Heaven his Dwelling-place, and hearing, forgive.*——

FINIS.

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* 1 Kings viii.